



Suction Dredge Mining in Idaho: Update

Natural Resources Interim Committee

September 17, 2014



Suction Dredge Mining in Idaho

Regulated as a Stream Channel Alteration (SCA)
pursuant to Stream Channel Protection Act & Rules

- SC Protection Act created in 1971
 - See Chapter 38, Title 42
 - Permits required for SCA, including dredges
- SCA Rules – IDAPA 37.03.07
 - Rule 64 - Minimum Standards for Suction Dredging & Non-Powered Sluice Equipment

Recreational Mining

SCA Rule 64 –Standards for Suction Dredges & Non-Powered Sluice Equipment

- engine/motor rated at 15 HP or less
- nozzle intake diameter of 5 inches or less
- non-powered sluice equip. moving more than $\frac{1}{4}$ cubic yard per hour

Recreational Mining – Letter Permit & Instructions

- Authorizes alteration of stream channel as defined by the Standards (Rule 64)
- Instructions establish guidelines for rec. mining
 - list of open and closed streams & seasons of use

<http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/RulesStatutesForms/StreamChannel/StreamChannelForms.htm>

Recreational Mining – Letter Permit

Letter Permit – Features

- Process in place since 2010
- Former process required IDWR review and signature approval (one to seven days)
- One Stop Permit for both IDWR & Lands
(Lands - mining on navigable rivers)
- Implemented after Zero Based Budgeting
- low program priority & reduced staffing

Non-Recreational Mining

Use of dredges that exceed Rule 64 standards

- engine/motor > 15 HP
- nozzle intake diameter > 5 inches

Requires regular SCA permit application and review
(long form - joint application)

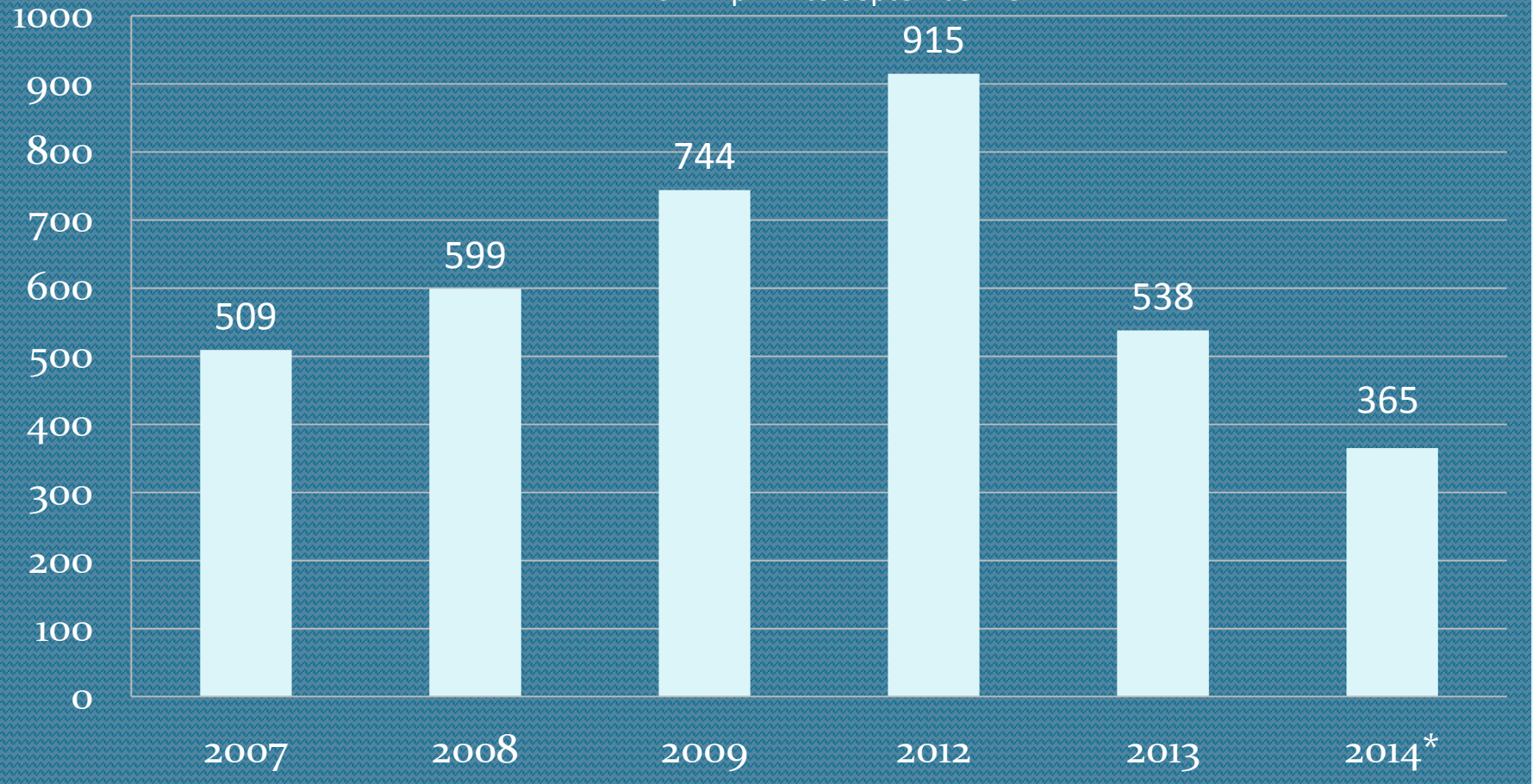
Long form application may be used for rec. mining
in closed streams or when proposing extended
season of operation

- very few long form permits received/issued

Recreational Mining - Permits Issued

Number of Recreational Mining Permits by Year Year = April 1 - March 1

* 2014 April 1 to September 15

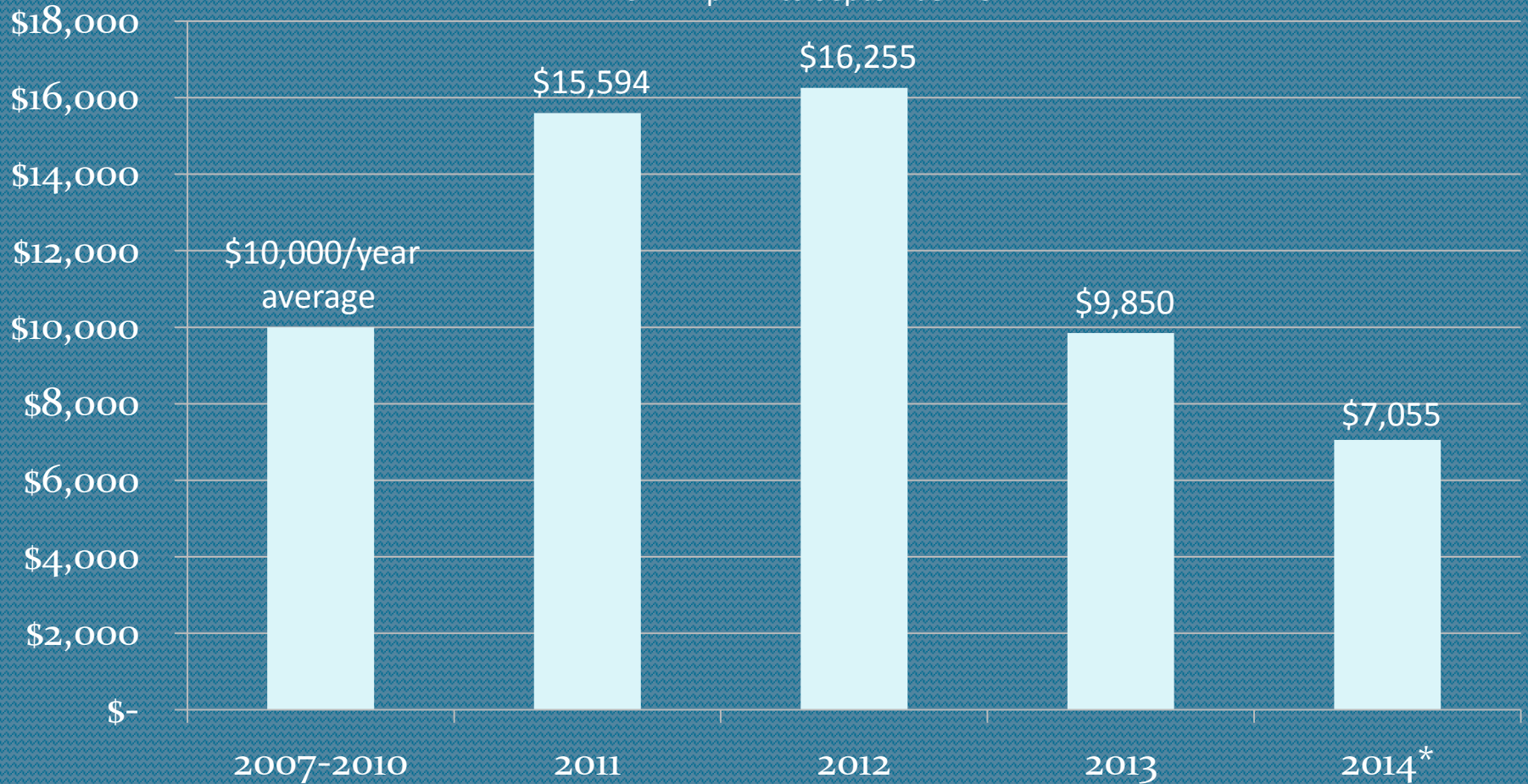


Data from 2010 – 2011 not available due to reduced staffing

Recreational Mining - Revenue

Recreational Mining Revenue

* 2014: April 1 to September 15



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In-state vs. Out-of State Permits

April 1 – September 15, 2014

In-State: 264

Out-of State: 101 (117 in 2013)

Total: 365

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EPA NPDES Permit vs. IDWR Permit

- EPA has closed all waters with ESA listed species
- Several reaches of ESA listed waters popular to dredging are open under IDWR permit
 - IDWR open reaches in ESA waters based upon recommendations from IDFG
 - Miners may need to work with Fed agencies on consultation process for ESA waters

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EPA NPDES Permit vs. IDWR Permit

- Some waters closed under IDWR instructions are open under EPA NPDES permit
 - this has not caused complaints or tension
- IDWR does not enforce EPA NPDES permit

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Future Status of IDWR Permitting?

- IDWR field monitoring & enforcement very limited due to lack of resources

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Future Status of IDWR Permitting?

- IDWR will continue program subject to statutory or rule changes
- No changes planned by IDWR

Recreational Mining



Questions?